



Make a difference. Submit your comments and let your voice be heard.

A dark blue rectangular search bar with rounded corners. Inside the bar, the text "SEARCH for: Rules, Comments, Adjudications or Supporting Documents:" is written in white. Below this text is a white input field. To the right of the input field is a blue button with the word "Search" in white. Below the button, the text "» Advanced Search" is written in white.

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Regulatory Process

Rulemaking is the policy-making process for Executive and Independent agencies of the Federal government. Agencies use this process to develop and issue Rules (Rules are also referred to as “regulations”).

The process is governed by the **Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. Chapter 5)** and can lead to a new Rule, an amendment to an existing Rule, or the repeal of an existing Rule. Executive Orders 12866, 13563, and 13579 also establish principles and guidance for the rulemaking process.

[Regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) is your source for information on the development of Federal regulations and other related documents issued by the U.S. government. Through this site, you can find, read, and comment on regulatory issues that are important to you.

On [Regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), you can find and comment on proposed regulations and related documents published by the U.S. Federal government.

You can also find:

- Final Regulations
- Notices
- Scientific and Technical Findings Guidance
- Adjudications
- Comments Submitted by Others

How to Find a Rule on Regulations.gov

You can find a rule on [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) by entering a keyword, title, or document ID in the search area on the homepage and click the **"Search"** button. On the Search Results page, you can narrow your results with the filters on the screen. Once you find the regulation of interest, click its title to view the Document Details page.

How to Submit a Comment on Regulations.gov

Once you locate a document that is open for comment, click the **"Comment Now!"** button on either the Search Results or the Document Details page. This will display the Comment form. You can enter your comment on the form, attach files (up to 10MB each), as well as your personal information when applicable. Be sure to complete all required fields.

Please note that information entered on the web form may be viewable publicly.

These fields are identified by the globe icon. Once you reach the **"Your Preview"** screen, the information that will be viewable publicly is displayed directly on the form under the section titled: **"This information will appear on Regulations.gov."** To complete your comment, you must first agree to the disclaimer and check the box.

This will enable the **"Submit Comment"** button.

Upon completion, you will receive a Comment Tracking Number for your comment.

Tips for Submitting Effective Comments

- Read and understand the regulatory document you are commenting on
- Feel free to reach out to the agency with questions
- Be concise but support your claims
- Base your justification on sound reasoning, scientific evidence, and/or how you will be impacted
- Address trade-offs and opposing views in your comment
- There is no minimum or maximum length for an effective comment



PUBLIC COMMENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Public participation matters. Democratic, legal, and management principles justify why public comments make a difference in regulatory policy. Public participation is an essential function of good governance. Participation enhances the quality of law and its realization through regulations (e.g. rules).

Democratic Principles

- **Legitimacy.** Participation in rulemaking lends democratic legitimacy to regulatory decisions.
- **Responsiveness.** Government officials can respond to people's needs, grievances, or preferences. Comments can also clarify the legislative intent of Congress.
- **Acceptance.** Public comments assist the ability of agencies to determine the level of acceptance or resistance in affected communities to a rule under development.
- **Public Interest.** Public comments shape how the public interest will be served by the rule.

Legal Principles

- **Requirement.** By law, Federal agencies must consult the public in rulemaking. Based in section 553 of the Administrative Procedure Act, the law states "the agency shall give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making through submission of written data, views, or arguments with or without opportunity for oral presentation. After consideration of the relevant matter presented, the agency shall incorporate in the rules."
- **Reduce Conflict.** By having many different comments, rule writers can weigh competing interests carefully and craft consensus around acceptable alternatives.
- **Reduce Litigation.** Comments help agencies check the likelihood of a lawsuit that might challenge a rule before its completion.
- **Public Priorities.** Comments help agencies determine which public priorities can be implemented under the congressional or statutory authority of the rule.

Management Principles

- **Impacts Policy.** Agencies genuinely value public participation because it impacts the outcomes of regulatory policy. The Federal Register confirms that comments are carefully recorded and examined. Agencies respond to comments by categories in the preambles of final rules.
- **Distributed expertise.** No agency has perfect knowledge. Some of the information needed to conduct risk assessments for health and safety, for example, comes from those regulated. This information can alert agencies to unforeseen options or consequences of proposed rules. Also, the more comments, the greater likelihood of collecting the most accurate, useful, and current information for the development of rules [regulations].



- **Learning.** Agencies can better assess how much those regulated will need to learn and the level of training involved for government officials in charge of oversight.
- **Reduces cost.** Comments give rule writers a chance to actively listen to a wide-range of concerns, values, and preferences. They strive to understand the data presented, why people raise specific questions, and how to logically support a decision with all the necessary and relevant evidence. To reduce costs associated with delays or litigation, agencies strive to carefully consider the merits of many comments in order to recommend reasonable action.
- **Respect and Reliance.** Agencies respect the views and questions of others without biased judgment or unfair criticism. Also, they rely on the public for much of the information they request to develop rules.